A LESSON FROM MARY AND JOSEPH

THRIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

MAKADO VESPERS

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Dedication

To all who seek to walk in faith and love, just as Mary and Joseph did. May this book inspire you to trust in God's plan, even in moments of uncertainty. May you find strength in His provision, joy in His calling, and peace in knowing that He is always in control.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's world, financial security is often seen as a prerequisite for marriage, relationships, and even fulfilling God's calling. Many young couples delay marriage, convinced that they must first accumulate wealth before making a lifelong commitment. Others struggle with doubt, believing that their lack of financial resources disqualifies them from love, family life, and even ministry. But what if this belief is flawed? What if the greatest examples of faith, commitment, and purpose in scripture came from individuals who had little wealth yet accomplished great things?

The story of Mary and Joseph stands as a timeless lesson that love and faith transcend material possessions. The earthly parents of Jesus Christ were not rich by societal standards, yet they were entrusted with the greatest responsibility in history—raising the Son of God. Despite their humble status, they nurtured Jesus in love and obedience, proving that divine purpose is not determined by financial stability but by faithfulness and commitment. Their journey together, marked by challenges, uncertainty, and social scrutiny, is a testament to the power of love that thrives beyond economic conditions.

Throughout the ages, cultures have placed a strong emphasis on wealth as a measure of success in relationships. In many societies, a man is expected to have financial security before proposing marriage, and a woman is often judged based on the material comforts she can provide within a household. This mindset has led to unnecessary delays in marriage, anxiety over financial readiness, and even the breakdown of relationships when economic hardship arises. But Mary and Joseph's story dismantles this worldly notion. Their love was not founded on riches but on trust in God and mutual dedication.

This book explores their journey, offering a biblical perspective on thriving in love and faith despite financial struggles. It is not merely a study of their circumstances but a deep dive into the principles that made their relationship strong. How did Mary and Joseph maintain their faith when faced with overwhelming challenges? What made their love endure through uncertainty and hardship? How did they prioritize their spiritual calling over material wealth?

By examining key scriptures—primarily from the books of Luke and Leviticus—we will uncover divine wisdom applicable to modern relationships. We will learn that true love is not built on bank accounts but on faith, patience, sacrifice, and trust in God's provision. Couples today can take valuable lessons from Mary and Joseph's unwavering commitment to each other and to their divine assignment.

The Bible provides many examples of individuals who walked in their purpose despite financial lack. From the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16) who sustained the prophet Elijah with her last bit of flour and oil, to the Apostle Paul who learned contentment in both abundance and lack (Philippians 4:12), scripture is filled with reminders that God is not limited by our resources. He calls us to obedience and faith, not to financial perfection.

Jesus Himself was born in a stable, not a palace. His earthly parents could only afford two doves as an offering instead of a lamb, signifying their humble economic status (Luke 2:24, Leviticus 12:8). Yet, despite these conditions, Jesus was raised in wisdom, strength, and favor with God and man. This alone should challenge the modern obsession with wealth as a prerequisite for a fulfilled life.

Throughout this book, we will debunk the myth that financial security is a prerequisite for a strong relationship or a fruitful marriage. We will see how Mary and Joseph's journey proves that God's favor is not reserved for the rich, but for the faithful. We will also provide practical steps for couples and individuals seeking to build relationships based on God's principles rather than societal expectations.

If you have ever questioned whether your lack of financial resources disqualifies you from love, purpose, or marriage, this book is for you. If you have felt pressured by cultural norms to prioritize wealth over faith in your relationships, this book will offer biblical clarity. And if you are already in a relationship or marriage but struggling with financial difficulties, Mary and Joseph's story will encourage you to trust God's plan and walk in obedience despite the challenges.

God's ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). He does not look at wealth or status but at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). It is our prayer that as you journey through these pages, your perspective on love, marriage, and faith will be transformed. May you be encouraged to pursue relationships not based on material gain, but on the enduring foundation of love, commitment, and trust in God's provision. As we embark on this journey through scripture and real-life application, open your heart to the lessons that Mary and Joseph's story has to offer. Let this book be a guide to thriving in love and faith, no matter your financial situation.

THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS OF MARY AND JOSEPH

The story of Mary and Joseph begins in obscurity, far removed from the glamour of royal lineage or the wealth of the ruling elite. Mary, a young woman from Nazareth, and Joseph, a carpenter, were not positioned in life for greatness according to worldly standards. Yet, God chose them for an extraordinary purpose—to raise the Son of God. This is a powerful reminder that God often works through the humble, the overlooked, and the poor to accomplish His greatest plans.

In Luke 1:26-38, we read about the angel's visit to Mary, announcing that she would conceive a child by the Holy Spirit. Though Mary was initially troubled by the angel's message, her response was one of complete submission: "**I am the Lord's servant**," she said, "**may your word to me be fulfilled.**" This was an act of profound faith. Mary's willingness to accept her divine calling, despite the social stigma she might face as an unmarried pregnant woman, demonstrates her obedience and trust in God's plan.

Joseph, too, responded with unwavering faith. When he learned that Mary was pregnant, he initially considered quietly divorcing her to avoid public disgrace. But in Matthew 1:20-21, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and reassured him that the child conceived in Mary was from the Holy Spirit. Joseph, like Mary, chose to obey God's instructions. He took Mary as his wife and became the earthly father to Jesus.

Both Mary and Joseph were from humble origins, yet God chose them to play an unparalleled role in salvation history. This teaches us that greatness in God's eyes is not determined by wealth, social standing, or power, but by faithfulness and obedience. They embraced God's call on their lives, demonstrating that humble beginnings do not hinder divine destiny.

Their story challenges our contemporary obsession with wealth and status. In today's world, people often feel pressured to accumulate material resources before pursuing relationships, family, or purpose. But Mary and Joseph's example teaches us that God does not require wealth to fulfill His plans for us. He calls us to be faithful and obedient, and in His hands, our humble circumstances can be used to bring about extraordinary outcomes.

As we reflect on the lives of Mary and Joseph, we are reminded that God does not look at the outward appearance, but at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). Regardless of your financial situation or social status, you are still capable of fulfilling God's divine purpose in your life. Just as Mary and Joseph embraced God's calling despite their poverty, we too can trust that God will use our lives, regardless of where we start, to bring about His perfect plan.

THE LAW OF SACRIFICE AND THE OFFERING OF THE POOR

In the Levitical law, after a woman gave birth, she was required to bring a sacrifice for her purification. This law is outlined in Leviticus 12:6-8:

"When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way, the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean."

The prescribed offering of a lamb and a pigeon or dove was intended for those who could afford it. However, for those who were poor, like Mary and Joseph, the law provided an alternative: two doves or pigeons. This is significant because it highlights their economic status—they were not wealthy enough to offer a lamb, a more costly sacrifice. Instead, they offered the alternative allowed by the law, two doves.

In Luke 2:24, we see that Mary and Joseph followed this part of the law when they presented their offering in the temple. "**And to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: 'a pair of doves or two young pigeons.**'" This is a powerful reminder that even in their poverty, Mary and Joseph remained faithful to God's commands. Their humble offering was a testimony of their obedience, demonstrating that even in the midst of financial difficulty, they prioritized following God's law.

This provision in the law of sacrifice serves as a metaphor for God's grace. It reminds us that God understands our limitations and makes allowances for our circumstances. He does not demand perfection, but obedience. For Mary and Joseph, the offering of

two doves was not an act of mere ritual—it was a demonstration of their faithfulness and devotion, despite their lack of material wealth.

Today, we might feel discouraged if we cannot give as much as we would like, whether in our finances, our time, or our resources. However, God values obedience over sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). Just as Mary and Joseph were obedient with their humble offering, we too are called to offer what we have, trusting that God sees our hearts and will bless our faithfulness.

MARY AND JOSEPH'S FINANCIAL STATUS: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Mary and Joseph's financial status was not just a footnote in their story; it provides profound insight into God's economy and His values. At the time of Jesus' birth, the world measured success by wealth, land, and power. The Roman Empire, under whose rule Mary and Joseph lived, was characterized by oppression and economic disparity. In this context, Mary and Joseph's modest financial situation may have seemed to disqualify them from being part of any great purpose.

Yet, despite their poverty, they were chosen to be the earthly parents of Jesus Christ. In Luke 2:7, we read that when Jesus was born, "there was no room for them in the inn." Instead of being born in a lavish palace, He was laid in a manger—a feeding trough for animals. This moment underscores the humble beginnings of the Messiah and highlights the truth that God's plan is not limited by our financial situation.

The contrast between Jesus' birth in a stable and the wealth and power of rulers at the time is stark. Yet, it demonstrates that God values humility and obedience far more than material wealth. In Matthew 19:24, Jesus teaches that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." Wealth can become a barrier to spiritual growth if it becomes an idol. Mary and Joseph's story encourages us to remember that wealth is not a guarantee of God's favor, nor does lack of wealth disqualify us from His purposes.

Throughout Scripture, we see that God often chooses the weak and the poor to accomplish His greatest works. Consider the story of David, a young shepherd boy overlooked by his family, who was anointed to be king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:7). Or Gideon, who initially considered himself the least of his tribe, yet was called by God

to lead Israel to victory (Judges 6:15). Similarly, Mary and Joseph, though poor, were chosen by God to be part of the most important mission in human history.

In our society today, many feel that wealth is the key to success and fulfillment. But Mary and Joseph's example reminds us that God can use anyone, regardless of their financial situation, to fulfill His divine plan. Their story teaches us that financial status does not determine worth or destiny. Instead, faith and obedience are what matter most.

FAITH OVER FINANCES: THRIVING IN MARRIAGE DESPITE POVERTY

In a world that often prioritizes financial success, Mary and Joseph's story provides a powerful lesson that love, faith, and commitment are the true foundations of a thriving marriage, not material wealth. Despite facing immense financial hardship, they remained steadfast in their love for one another and in their faithfulness to God's calling.

At the time of their marriage, Mary and Joseph were likely facing financial difficulties, as evidenced by their humble offering at the temple. Yet, their relationship was not built on the wealth or material resources they had; it was built on love, faith, and trust in God. This is particularly significant, as many couples today feel that they cannot begin a family or marriage until they have financial security. However, Mary and Joseph's story challenges this view and demonstrates that a marriage can flourish even in the face of financial difficulties.

In Luke 1:38, Mary's response to the angel is one of humble obedience: "**I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled**." This response is not just a testament to her faith but also a reflection of her deep commitment to God's plan, and in turn, to Joseph. Joseph's willingness to marry Mary, despite the potential scandal of her pregnancy, shows his commitment to her and his trust in God's plan. He chose faith over fear and financial concerns.

For Mary and Joseph, their union was about more than just providing for each other financially. It was about being obedient to God's calling and trusting that He would provide for their needs. Their faith in God's provision allowed them to thrive in their relationship, even without the financial resources that the world often considers necessary for happiness.

In today’s world, it’s easy to get caught up in the pursuit of wealth, believing that financial security is the key to happiness and stability. However, Mary and Joseph's example teaches us that love, faith, and trust in God are far more important than financial prosperity. When we focus on building a relationship grounded in faith, commitment, and trust, we can weather any financial storm.

Mary and Joseph's story invites us to ask: What is the foundation of our relationships? Are we seeking fulfillment in material wealth, or are we prioritizing faith, love, and commitment? Their example shows us that even in the absence of wealth, a marriage based on faith and mutual support can thrive and fulfill God's purpose.

BREAKING THE MYTH: YOU DON'T NEED WEALTH TO START A FAMILY

One of the most common myths that people today believe is that they must have financial stability before they can get married or start a family. Society often pressures individuals to wait until they are financially secure before taking such important steps. However, the story of Mary and Joseph shatters this misconception and offers a fresh perspective on what truly matters when building a family.

Mary and Joseph did not wait for financial security before they embraced God's call to marry and raise a family. They trusted God's plan for their lives, even though they lacked the material wealth that many might consider essential for starting a family. In fact, their humble beginnings were part of God's greater plan, demonstrating that a family can be built on love, trust, and faith, rather than wealth.

The Bible is full of stories of individuals who trusted God's provision despite their lack of resources. Abraham and Sarah, for example, were called to leave their homeland and step into the unknown, trusting that God would provide for them and their descendants (Genesis 12:1-4). Similarly, Mary and Joseph stepped into an unknown future, trusting that God would provide for their needs, even though they had little by way of material wealth.

In Luke 2:7, we see that Mary and Joseph had no choice but to lay Jesus in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. This humble circumstance didn't hinder God's plan for their lives; instead, it became part of the miraculous story of the birth of Jesus. Their experience teaches us that God's provision does not depend on financial wealth or security. When we trust in God, He will provide for our needs, regardless of our circumstances.

The world’s definition of success is often tied to financial gain. However, Mary and Joseph's story reveals that true success lies in obeying God’s calling and trusting Him to provide for us. Wealth is not a prerequisite for building a family or pursuing God’s plan for your life. When we prioritize God over material possessions, He will guide us and provide for us in ways that we cannot imagine.

As we seek to build our families, we should remember that love, faith, and commitment are far more important than financial wealth. Just as Mary and Joseph trusted God in their poverty, we too can trust Him to provide for us as we build our own families and step into the future He has for us.

THE POWER OF COMMITMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

One of the most remarkable aspects of Mary and Joseph's relationship was their unwavering commitment to each other and to God's plan. Their love and devotion were not based on what they could gain from one another but on a shared faith and trust in God's will. This commitment, rooted in their relationship with God, became the foundation upon which they built their family.

Commitment in relationships, particularly in marriage, is often tested by challenges, and financial struggles can be one of the most trying of these challenges. Yet, the commitment between Mary and Joseph never wavered, even in the face of uncertainty and hardship. They understood that love is not just a feeling but a choice—a decision to remain faithful to one another despite circumstances.

Joseph's commitment to Mary is evident in his decision to marry her after learning of her pregnancy. Despite the potential scandal and shame, Joseph chose to stay with Mary because he trusted God's plan. His commitment to Mary and to God was stronger than any fear or doubt that might have arisen. Similarly, Mary's commitment to Joseph and to God was demonstrated by her willingness to accept God's will for her life, even when it meant facing public shame and hardship.

In today's world, many relationships break down under the strain of financial difficulties. However, Mary and Joseph's example teaches us that commitment to each other and to God can overcome any obstacle. Financial problems may cause stress and tension, but when both partners are committed to the relationship and to God's plan, they can weather any storm.

Commitment is a choice that must be renewed daily. It is not always easy, and it may require sacrifice, but it is essential for a relationship to thrive. In the case of Mary and

Joseph, their commitment to each other and to God's will created a foundation of trust, love, and faith that allowed them to fulfill their divine purpose.

Their story teaches us that commitment is not dependent on external circumstances. Whether wealthy or poor, married couples must choose to remain committed to each other and to God’s plan for their lives. When commitment is the foundation, relationships can endure any hardship and flourish in God’s timing.

TRUSTING GOD IN TIMES OF FINANCIAL STRUGGLES

Mary and Joseph's journey through financial hardships is a profound testament to the power of trusting God in the most challenging circumstances. Despite their lack of material wealth, they relied on God to provide for their needs, demonstrating unwavering faith that His provision would always be sufficient.

In Matthew 6:25-26, Jesus teaches us not to worry about our material needs: "**Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?**"

This powerful passage encourages us to trust that God will provide for us just as He provided for Mary and Joseph. When they fled to Egypt to escape King Herod's decree, they had no known means of support, but God provided a way. He led them to Egypt, a place of safety, and provided for their needs during their time of exile.

Throughout their journey, Mary and Joseph did not succumb to fear or doubt. They chose to trust in God's provision, even when the circumstances were difficult. Their faith was not contingent on their wealth but on the certainty that God would provide, just as He had promised.

In our own lives, financial struggles can cause anxiety and worry. But Mary and Joseph's example reminds us that God's provision is not limited by our financial status. We may not always know how or when our needs will be met, but we can trust that God will provide for us in His perfect timing.

In times of financial difficulty, it's essential to remember that God is our provider. We may not understand why we're facing financial challenges, but we can be confident that He is with us through every trial. Just as He provided for Mary and Joseph, He will provide for us. When we trust in Him, we can experience peace in the midst of financial uncertainty.

This trust in God's provision does not mean we should be passive or neglect our responsibilities. However, it means that we should rely on God's wisdom and guidance, knowing that He will lead us through our struggles and provide for our needs.

MARRIAGE: A COVENANT, NOT A CONTRACT

Mary and Joseph's relationship exemplifies the true meaning of marriage as a covenant, not a contract. A contract is based on mutual benefit and is often dissolved when one party fails to fulfill their obligations. However, a covenant is a sacred promise made before God, and it is not contingent on circumstances or material gain.

In the Bible, marriage is described as a covenant that mirrors the relationship between Christ and the Church. Ephesians 5:25-27 teaches: "**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless**." This scripture calls for husbands to love their wives sacrificially, just as Christ loves the Church, and for wives to respect and honor their husbands.

Mary and Joseph's relationship was grounded in this kind of sacrificial love and mutual respect. They did not marry out of convenience or because of financial benefits but because they were committed to God's plan. Their marriage was not a contract, which could have been broken if they faced hardship or unmet expectations, but a covenant—a divine promise that was sealed by faith, trust, and love.

In today's world, many people view marriage as a contract, where each party seeks to gain something from the relationship. However, a biblical understanding of marriage calls for sacrificial love and commitment, even in difficult times. Mary and Joseph's marriage was a living example of this covenantal love. They did not abandon each other in the face of challenges but leaned into God's purpose for their lives together.

As we reflect on Mary and Joseph's story, we are reminded that a true marriage is built on faithfulness to God and to each other, not on the temporary circumstances of life.

A covenantal marriage goes beyond earthly expectations and embraces the divine purpose for the relationship. No matter the financial struggles or challenges faced, a marriage founded on covenantal love will endure and thrive.

SEGMENT 10

WEALTH DOESN'T DEFINE YOUR WORTH

Mary and Joseph's humble financial status challenges the worldly notion that wealth defines a person's worth. Despite their poverty, they were chosen by God to fulfill one of the most important roles in history: raising Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Their story demonstrates that material wealth does not determine one's value in God's eyes.

In 1 Samuel 16:7, the Lord tells Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." This passage reminds us that God evaluates us based on our hearts, not our outward appearance or material possessions.

Mary and Joseph were not wealthy by any worldly standard. Yet, God chose them for His divine purpose because of their faithfulness, obedience, and humility. Their value was not in their financial status but in their hearts and their willingness to follow God's call.

In a society that often measures success by wealth and material possessions, it can be easy to feel less worthy if we don't have financial abundance. However, Mary and Joseph's story reminds us that our worth is not defined by our bank accounts but by our relationship with God. He sees us as valuable not because of what we own but because of who we are in Him.

True worth comes from being loved by God and fulfilling His purpose for our lives. No amount of money can change the fact that we are cherished and valued by our Creator. Mary and Joseph's example challenges us to shift our focus from worldly measures of success to the eternal value that God places on us.

GOD'S FAVOR IS NOT LIMITED TO THE RICH

Many people mistakenly believe that God's favor is reserved for the wealthy, but Mary and Joseph's story challenges this belief. Despite their poverty, they were chosen by God to fulfill a divine purpose—raising the Savior of the world. This shows us that God's favor is not determined by our financial status but by our obedience and faithfulness to His will.

In Luke 1:28, the angel Gabriel greets Mary with the words, "**Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.**" Mary was not wealthy, but she was highly favored by God because of her faith and obedience. Similarly, Joseph, though a humble carpenter, was chosen by God to be the earthly father of Jesus.

God's favor is not about material wealth or worldly success. It is about His presence in our lives and His ability to use us for His divine purposes. Whether rich or poor, God can bless us and use us for His glory if we are willing to follow Him and trust in His plan.

When we face financial struggles, it's easy to question whether God's favor is upon us. However, Mary and Joseph's example reminds us that God's favor is not limited by our financial status. He chooses to bless those who are faithful and obedient to Him, regardless of their earthly possessions.

SERVING GOD IS NOT LIMITED BY FINANCIAL STATUS

Mary and Joseph's story reveals an important truth: serving God is not limited by financial resources. Despite their humble financial situation, they were faithful to their calling, and God used them mightily. Their willingness to serve God in the midst of their struggles shows that service to God transcends material wealth.

Jesus Himself, when speaking to His disciples, said in Matthew 19:24, "**Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.**" This statement challenges the misconception that wealth equates to righteousness or divine favor. It is not how much we have, but how much we are willing to give of ourselves in service to God that truly matters.

Mary and Joseph's obedience to God's call did not depend on their financial standing. They didn't need material abundance to fulfill their roles as the parents of Jesus. They served God with what they had, and that was enough for Him to use them in powerful ways.

In our own lives, it's easy to believe that we need wealth or resources to serve God effectively. However, the truth is that God can use anyone, regardless of their financial status. He looks at the heart and the willingness to serve. Whether we have a lot or a little, God can use us to impact the world for His kingdom.

As we strive to serve God, we should not focus on our lack of material wealth but on our desire to live for His glory. God's purpose is not hindered by our financial situation. He is looking for faithful hearts that are willing to serve and obey His call, just as Mary and Joseph did.

THE GREATEST TREASURE: LOVE, FAITH, AND OBEDIENCE

The story of Mary and Joseph teaches us that the greatest treasures in life are not found in wealth, fame, or material possessions but in love, faith, and obedience to God. These three virtues form the foundation of a strong, thriving marriage and a fulfilling life.

In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul writes, "**And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love**." The love that Mary and Joseph shared was not based on wealth or comfort but on their deep faith in God and their willingness to obey His plan for their lives. Their love was sacrificial, rooted in a deep sense of commitment to each other and to God's divine purpose.

Faith, too, played a central role in their journey. They believed in God's plan, even when it seemed impossible. When Mary was told she would conceive by the Holy Spirit, she responded with faith, saying, "**I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled**" (Luke 1:38). Joseph, too, trusted in God's plan, even when it required him to take Mary as his wife despite the social stigma they would face.

Obedience to God was the third key element that defined their relationship. They didn't simply believe in God's promises but acted on them. Their obedience wasn't just about following the letter of the law; it was about trusting God's guidance in every aspect of their lives. In their obedience, they played a critical role in God's grand narrative of salvation.

For couples today, Mary and Joseph's example is a powerful reminder that love, faith, and obedience are the true treasures that sustain a relationship. No amount of money or worldly success can replace these virtues. If we build our lives and marriages on

love, faith, and obedience to God, we will experience a deep fulfillment that transcends financial struggles and hardships.

OVERCOMING FINANCIAL CHALLENGES AS A COUPLE

Financial struggles can be one of the greatest challenges couples face. However, Mary and Joseph's example shows us that even in the midst of financial hardship, a marriage can thrive when built on faith, love, and mutual support.

When faced with financial difficulties, it's important to focus on the following:

1. Unity in Purpose: Mary and Joseph were united in their commitment to God's purpose. Despite the challenges they faced, they never wavered in their devotion to each other and to God's plan. Couples today should focus on the bigger picture: their shared purpose and the role they play in God's plan. This unity can help couples navigate financial difficulties together.

2. Communication: Open communication is essential in any marriage, especially during financial struggles. Mary and Joseph communicated openly with each other, supporting each other through challenging times. Couples should make time to talk about their financial concerns, share their fears, and pray together for guidance.

3. Trusting God's Provision: One of the key lessons from Mary and Joseph is their trust in God's provision. They didn't rely on their wealth but on God's faithfulness. Couples facing financial hardship should remember that God is their provider and trust that He will meet their needs, just as He did for Mary and Joseph.

4. Shared Responsibility: Both Mary and Joseph were equally committed to their responsibilities. Mary accepted her calling as the mother of the Savior, and Joseph embraced his role as her protector and the earthly father of Jesus. Couples should

support each other in their roles and responsibilities, especially when facing difficult financial circumstances.

5. Gratitude for What You Have: Even in their poverty, Mary and Joseph were grateful for what they had. They didn't dwell on their lack but focused on the blessings they had received. In marriage, practicing gratitude helps to cultivate a positive outlook, even during financial challenges.

By following these principles, couples can overcome financial struggles and grow stronger together. Mary and Joseph's story reminds us that financial difficulties don't have to break a marriage. With faith, unity, communication, and trust in God's provision, couples can navigate any financial challenge and emerge stronger in their relationship.

LESSONS FROM MARY AND JOSEPH FOR MODERN RELATIONSHIPS

The story of Mary and Joseph offers timeless lessons for modern relationships, especially for couples navigating the challenges of marriage and family life. Their example speaks to the importance of faith, love, and trust in God as the foundation of a healthy and thriving relationship.

Some key lessons from their story include:

1. **Faith in God's Plan**: Mary and Joseph trusted in God's plan, even when it seemed uncertain or difficult. Today's couples can learn from their example by putting their faith in God's guidance and trusting that He has a purpose for their relationship.

2. **Commitment to Each Other**: Despite the difficulties they faced, Mary and Joseph remained committed to each other and to their calling. This commitment, rooted in faith and love, sustained their marriage. Couples today should prioritize their commitment to each other, especially during times of hardship.

3. **Obedience to God**: Mary and Joseph's obedience to God was essential to fulfilling His plan. In our relationships, obedience to God's word and His calling is essential for building a strong, enduring bond.

4. **Humility in Difficult Times**: Mary and Joseph did not let their poverty or difficult circumstances define their worth or their relationship. Their humility and willingness to serve God, regardless of their financial status, serve as an example for us today.

By applying these lessons, modern couples can build strong relationships rooted in faith, love, and commitment, just as Mary and Joseph did. Their story serves as a

powerful reminder that true love is not defined by wealth or circumstances but by the willingness to follow God's call and trust in His provision.

THRIVING IN LOVE DESPITE CHALLENGES

Mary and Joseph's relationship provides an inspiring example of how love can thrive, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. Despite their humble beginnings, the societal pressure, and the financial struggles they endured, their love for one another remained strong, grounded in faith and devotion to God.

For many couples today, financial struggles can test the strength of their relationship. But the example of Mary and Joseph reminds us that it is not our material wealth that determines the strength of a relationship; rather, it is our faith in God, our commitment to each other, and our ability to persevere together through trials.

In relationships, love and faith are like an unshakeable foundation. When faced with challenges—whether financial, emotional, or relational—couples can turn to God and each other. Their shared trust in God's provision and their deep love for one another carried them through the toughest moments.

The love that Mary and Joseph shared was not based on comfort or wealth but on a shared mission and a mutual commitment to fulfill God's purpose. This same love, rooted in faith, can be the driving force in modern relationships. Couples today can thrive in love, even amidst the toughest financial or personal struggles, by keeping God at the center of their relationship and drawing strength from their commitment to one another.

When facing hardships, remember that thriving in love doesn't mean living without challenges; it means facing them together, with faith and love as your guiding principles.

HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR MARRIAGE DURING HARDSHIPS

Financial difficulties can often bring strain to a marriage, but they also offer an opportunity to grow stronger as a couple. Just as Mary and Joseph supported each other through their challenges, couples today can strengthen their marriage by focusing on key aspects of their relationship that transcend financial concerns.

Here are some practical steps to strengthen your marriage during hardships:

1. **Pray Together**: One of the most powerful ways to strengthen your relationship is by praying together. Mary and Joseph's faith was evident in their constant trust in God's provision. Couples today should pray for wisdom, patience, and guidance through financial struggles. Prayer can bring you closer, create a shared spiritual foundation, and invite God's presence into your marriage.

2. **Communicate Openly**: In times of financial stress, it is essential to communicate openly about your concerns, hopes, and dreams. Mary and Joseph supported each other with open communication, which helped them navigate difficult circumstances. Open dialogue helps both partners feel heard, understood, and supported.

3. **Support Each Other's Roles**: Mary and Joseph each had a role to play in the upbringing of Jesus. Likewise, couples today can strengthen their marriages by supporting each other's roles and responsibilities. Whether it's managing finances, raising children, or supporting each other emotionally, couples should work together to share responsibilities and encourage each other.

4. **Practice Gratitude**: Gratitude transforms a perspective of lack into one of abundance. In the midst of struggles, remember to thank God for what you do have—

the love of your spouse, your health, and the opportunity to grow together. Mary and Joseph were humble and grateful for their blessings, and this attitude can help couples navigate financial hardships with a positive outlook.

5. **Remain Focused on God's Purpose:** Just as Mary and Joseph remained focused on God's purpose for their lives, couples today should remember that their financial struggles are part of a bigger story. Stay focused on God's purpose for your marriage, and trust that He will guide you through difficult times.

6. **Seek Wise Counsel**: Just as Joseph was open to God's guidance through dreams and angelic messages, modern couples can seek wisdom from trusted mentors, counselors, or pastors. Seeking advice from those who have navigated financial struggles and relationships can provide valuable insight and encouragement.

By practicing these principles, couples can build a marriage that not only survives but thrives during hardships. Financial struggles may come and go, but the strength of a marriage rooted in faith and commitment will last a lifetime.

LOVE AND FAITH: THE FOUNDATIONS OF A LASTING MARRIAGE

The foundation of a lasting marriage is not built on wealth, material success, or external validation, but on love and faith. Mary and Joseph's marriage was not perfect in the eyes of the world, but it was perfect in the eyes of God because it was rooted in these two key principles.

In 1 John 4:19, we are reminded that "**We love because He first loved us**." The love Mary and Joseph shared was a reflection of the love they had received from God. Their commitment to each other was based on their mutual understanding of God's love for them, and this deep spiritual foundation held them together in the face of adversity.

Faith is the other pillar of a lasting marriage. Faith in God and faith in each other provide the strength to persevere through challenges. Mary and Joseph's faith in God's plan for their lives gave them the courage to face their difficulties and trust in God's provision. In the same way, couples today can build a lasting marriage by placing their faith in God, trusting that He will guide them through every season of life.

When love and faith are the foundation of a marriage, couples can weather any storm. No matter the financial challenges or obstacles that may arise, these two elements will hold the relationship together. The love that is shared between a husband and wife, grounded in faith, is a love that can endure, grow, and thrive.

WALKING IN GOD'S PURPOSE DESPITE LACK

Mary and Joseph's story teaches us that we can walk in God's purpose even when we feel like we lack the resources, opportunities, or circumstances to do so. They did not have great wealth or status, but they had an unwavering trust in God's plan for their lives.

God's purpose is not limited by our financial status or material possessions. Even when we lack what the world says we need to succeed, we can still walk in God's purpose because He is the one who equips us. Mary and Joseph were not perfect, but they were obedient, and their obedience led to the fulfillment of God's plan for the world.

Today, many people feel that they cannot walk in God's purpose because of their lack of resources. But the truth is that God does not call the equipped; He equips the called. He can use us to accomplish His will, regardless of our financial situation. Like Mary and Joseph, we must trust in God's provision and step out in faith, knowing that He will provide everything we need to fulfill His purpose.

When you feel lacking, remember that God has a plan for your life, and He will equip you to walk in that plan. Whether you are struggling financially or facing other challenges, God's purpose for you remains unchanged. Trust in His plan, and take steps toward it with faith.

THE CALL TO LOVE AND TRUST

The story of Mary and Joseph is a powerful reminder that love, faith, and trust in God are the most important elements of a successful marriage and a fulfilling life. Their journey shows us that we do not need wealth or material possessions to fulfill God's purpose; we need love, obedience, and a willingness to trust in His plan.

Mary and Joseph were ordinary people, living in humble circumstances, but they were chosen by God for the extraordinary task of raising the Savior of the world. Their love for each other, their faith in God, and their obedience to His calling were the foundation of their lives and their marriage.

Today, we are called to live with that same faith and commitment. Whether we are facing financial struggles or navigating the challenges of life, we are called to trust in God's plan for us, to love one another deeply, and to obey His guidance in every aspect of our lives.

Let Mary and Joseph's example inspire you to build your life and relationships on faith, love, and trust. No matter what challenges you may face, remember that God's plan for your life is greater than anything you can imagine. With love, faith, and trust in God, you can thrive in every season of life.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY SHOULD NEVER BE A REASON FOR DIVORCE OR BREAKING UP

In our society today, one of the leading causes of marital strain and eventual divorce is financial difficulty. Money problems can put immense pressure on a relationship. The stress of paying bills, managing debt, and meeting financial obligations can cause arguments, feelings of inadequacy, resentment, and isolation between spouses. Many couples feel that if they cannot achieve financial stability, their relationship is doomed. But this belief is rooted in worldly thinking, not in the truth found in God's Word.

When we look at the story of Mary and Joseph, we see a couple who faced immense financial struggles, yet their commitment to each other and their faith in God did not waver. They did not allow their lack of material wealth to drive a wedge between them. In fact, their humble circumstances actually strengthened their bond, as they trusted in God to provide for them despite their financial challenges. Their relationship was not based on wealth or prosperity but on love, faith, and obedience to God's calling.

1. The Power of Commitment in Marriage

Marriage is a covenant before God, not a contract based on circumstances. A contract is only valid as long as the agreed terms are met, often leaving room for dissolution when conditions change. A covenant, on the other hand, is an unbreakable bond sealed with vows made before God. The vows exchanged between a husband and wife are meant to be lifelong, regardless of external factors like wealth or health.

Mary and Joseph exemplify this commitment in their marriage. Despite facing societal judgment, poverty, and danger, they stood by each other, fulfilling their vows and keeping their covenant with God. Their love was not rooted in wealth, status, or

comfort; it was built on faith, trust, and the willingness to serve God's purpose together.

In the same way, couples today are called to approach their marriage with a mindset that transcends temporary struggles, including financial hardship. Marriage requires commitment, not just in good times but also in challenging seasons. Financial difficulty may test a marriage, but it should never be the reason for divorce or breaking up. Instead, it should be a time for couples to lean on each other, strengthen their bond, and trust in God's provision.

2. God's Provision in Times of Lack

When financial problems arise, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and discouraged. However, as Mary and Joseph's story reveals, God's provision does not depend on earthly wealth. God called Mary and Joseph to an extraordinary purpose, and despite their financial challenges, He made a way for them to fulfill that calling.

In Luke 2:24, we see that Mary and Joseph made an offering of two doves, a provision allowed by the Law of Moses for those who could not afford a lamb. This shows that God was not concerned with the material wealth of Mary and Joseph. He was concerned with their hearts, their obedience, and their willingness to follow His plan. And He provided for them in ways that allowed them to fulfill their mission.

Similarly, couples today must trust in God's provision, especially when faced with financial hardship. While finances may fluctuate, God remains steadfast. He knows our needs, and He will provide when we trust Him. In Philippians 4:19, Paul writes, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." This verse reminds us that our financial well-being is not dependent on our own efforts alone; it is ultimately in God's hands. Couples must lean on Him for guidance, provision, and peace during financial struggles rather than allowing money problems to drive a wedge between them.

3. Growing Stronger Through Financial Hardships

Financial struggles can serve as an opportunity for couples to grow stronger in their relationship. Hardships often reveal the depth of a relationship and the character of both partners. When faced with challenges, couples can choose to either grow closer together or grow apart. Mary and Joseph's relationship grew stronger because they shared a common purpose and trusted God together.

One of the key lessons we can learn from them is the importance of communication and mutual support in times of financial difficulty. Instead of allowing money problems to cause division, couples should use these moments as opportunities to build deeper trust. It is essential to communicate openly about finances, work together to create a plan, and support each other emotionally, spiritually, and practically.

In Romans 5:3-4, the Apostle Paul writes, "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance,

character; and character, hope." Financial difficulty can produce perseverance in a marriage when both spouses face the struggle together. It can shape their character and strengthen their bond. Overcoming financial challenges as a team can create a sense of unity and a deeper understanding of God's faithfulness.

4. Trusting God's Timing and Plan

One of the most important things couples can do when facing financial difficulties is to trust God's timing and plan. Mary and Joseph did not know what the future would hold, but they trusted God to lead them. They were willing to follow wherever He directed, even when the path was uncertain or difficult. They did not know how they would make ends meet, but they trusted in God's provision.

For modern couples, trusting God's timing means understanding that financial struggles are often temporary. Just as Mary and Joseph did not remain in their humble situation forever, God can change the financial circumstances of a couple in His perfect time. The key is to remain faithful, patient, and trusting while continuing to follow God's guidance.

Isaiah 55:8-9 reminds us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." While couples may not see a way out of their financial troubles, God's ways are higher, and His plan is always good. When couples trust in His wisdom and timing, they can rest in the assurance that He will provide in ways they cannot yet see.

5. Strengthening Marriage Through Prayer and Faith

Lastly, prayer plays a crucial role in overcoming financial difficulties as a couple. Mary and Joseph trusted in God's plan for their lives, and they communicated with Him through their actions and, undoubtedly, through prayer. They knew that God was with them, and they sought His guidance and provision throughout their journey.

Couples today must also pray together, lifting their financial concerns before God and seeking His direction. When both partners commit to praying for their marriage, for wisdom in managing finances, and for God's provision, they invite divine intervention into their relationship. Prayer strengthens the bond between spouses and aligns their hearts with God's will. As they bring their financial struggles to God, they can trust that He will provide the strength they need to persevere and the wisdom to navigate through difficult times.

Financial difficulty should never be a reason for divorce or breaking up. Just as Mary and Joseph proved, love, faith, and commitment to God's plan are more important than wealth. When couples face financial struggles, they have the opportunity to grow closer, trust God more deeply, and strengthen their relationship. Through communication, mutual support, prayer, and faith, couples can overcome financial challenges and build a marriage that is stronger and more resilient than ever before. God's provision is never limited by our financial status, and He will always provide for

those who trust in Him. Financial difficulty is temporary, but love, faith, and obedience to God are eternal.

SUMMARY

1. Introduction

In today's world, many believe that financial stability is a prerequisite for marriage, relationships, and even serving God. The idea that one must be wealthy to build a successful relationship or live a fulfilling life has caused many to delay marriage, end relationships, or doubt their calling in ministry.

However, the story of Mary and Joseph challenges this belief. The earthly parents of Jesus Christ were not wealthy, yet they were chosen by God for the greatest assignment in history—raising the Messiah. Their humble circumstances did not disqualify them from marriage, from purpose, or from God's favor.

This book explored their story, offering encouragement to couples, individuals, and believers facing financial struggles. It is a reminder that love, faith, and commitment are far more valuable than riches.

2. The Humble Beginnings of Mary and Joseph

Mary and Joseph were ordinary people. They were not born into wealth or royalty, yet they were chosen by God for an extraordinary purpose. Their story demonstrates that greatness is not determined by material possessions but by obedience and faith.

When Jesus was born, they did not have riches to offer Him. They did not have the luxury of a royal palace, and they did not even have enough money to offer a lamb as a sacrifice. Yet, they carried the Savior of the world in their arms.

3. The Law of Sacrifice and the Offering of the Poor

The Law of Moses required that after childbirth, a woman had to bring a sacrifice for purification. Leviticus 12:6-8 states:

"When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering."

However, for those who could not afford a lamb, the law made provision for them to offer two doves or two pigeons instead.

Mary and Joseph, following this law, brought two young pigeons (Luke 2:24), indicating that they could not afford a lamb.

4. Mary and Joseph's Financial Status: A Biblical Perspective

This detail in scripture speaks volumes about the financial situation of Mary and Joseph. If they had the means, they would have brought a lamb. Their offering of pigeons confirms their humble economic status.

Yet, despite their financial struggles, they were entrusted with raising the Son of God! This tells us that God's favor is not measured by financial wealth but by faith and obedience.

5. Faith Over Finances: Thriving in Marriage Despite Poverty

One of the greatest lessons from Mary and Joseph's story is that financial status should never be the foundation of a marriage.

They did not have riches, yet they had each other.

They faced societal judgment, yet they remained faithful.

They lacked material wealth, yet they had God's divine favor.

A strong relationship is not built on wealth but on faith, trust, and commitment.

6. Breaking the Myth: You Don't Need Wealth to Start a Family

Many today delay marriage, believing they need financial security before taking that step. However, Mary and Joseph's story teaches us that:

Love and commitment matter more than wealth.

God provides for those who walk in obedience.

A family can thrive even in humble beginnings.

7. The Power of Commitment in Relationships

Commitment is what kept Mary and Joseph together despite the challenges they faced. Their love was not based on material things but on faith in God and dedication to each other.

Modern relationships often suffer when financial hardships arise. But true love stands firm even in the face of financial difficulties.

8. Trusting God in Times of Financial Struggles

God provided for Mary and Joseph despite their financial struggles. He led them to safety when Herod sought to kill Jesus. He sustained them through their journey to Egypt.

This shows that God's provision is not dependent on human wealth but on divine purpose.

9. Marriage: A Covenant, Not a Contract

Marriage is a covenant before God, not a financial agreement. Couples should build their relationship on love, trust, and mutual support rather than financial gain.

10. Wealth Doesn't Define Your Worth

Society may judge people based on financial status, but God looks at the heart. Mary and Joseph were poor, yet they were chosen for a divine purpose.

No matter your financial status, you are valuable in God's eyes.

11. God's Favor is Not Limited to the Rich

Many believe that financial prosperity is the only sign of God's favor. However, Mary and Joseph's story proves that God's favor is not about material wealth but about faithfulness and obedience.

12. Serving God is Not Limited by Financial Status

You don't need to be rich to serve God. Many faithful servants in the Bible, including Mary and Joseph, served God despite their humble circumstances.

13. The Greatest Treasure: Love, Faith, and Obedience

What truly matters in life is not wealth but love, faith, and obedience to God. These are the treasures that sustain a marriage and a purpose-filled life.

14. Overcoming Financial Challenges as a Couple

Stay united and communicate.

Trust God's provision.

Focus on building a strong spiritual foundation.

Be content and grateful for what you have.

15. Lessons from Mary and Joseph for Modern Relationships

Trust in God's plan.

Stay committed despite financial hardships.

Build a relationship on faith, not material wealth.

16. Thriving in Love Despite Challenges

A relationship that is built on faith and love can withstand any challenge. Mary and Joseph thrived because they focused on God's purpose rather than their financial situation.

17. How to Strengthen Your Marriage During Hardships

Pray together.

Encourage and uplift each other.

Focus on spiritual and emotional growth rather than financial concerns.

18. Love and Faith: The Foundations of a Lasting Marriage

True love is not based on wealth but on trust, commitment, and faith.

19. Walking in God's Purpose Despite Lack

Even in financial struggles, God can use you for His purpose. Mary and Joseph had nothing, yet they raised the King of the world!

20. The Call to Love and Trust

Mary and Joseph's story teaches us that wealth is not a requirement for marriage, happiness, or serving God. Love, faith, and commitment are what truly matter.

Let this message be a reminder that God's favor is upon you, no matter your financial situation. Build your relationships on faith, and trust in God's divine provision.

MEET YOUR AUTHOR

MAKADO VESPERS

Conclusion

As we reflect on the journey of Mary and Joseph, we are reminded that faith and love are not defined by ease or comfort, but by trust in God's divine plan. Their story teaches us that no matter our circumstances—whether we feel unworthy, uncertain, or unprepared—God's purpose for our lives remains unshaken.

May this book serve as an encouragement to you. Wherever you are in your faith journey, know that God is with you. He sees your struggles, He knows your heart, and He is working all things together for your good.

Through the lessons of Mary and Joseph, we learn that thriving in love and faith is not about having all the answers, but about walking in obedience and trusting in God's unfailing love. My prayer is that you take these lessons to heart, live boldly in faith, and continue to grow in the love of Christ.

Words from the Author

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read Thriving in Love and Faith: A Lesson from Mary and Joseph. It has been my joy and privilege to share these insights with you, and I hope that this book has inspired and strengthened your walk with God.

Faith is not always easy. Love is not always simple. But when both are rooted in God, they become powerful forces that can transform lives. Like Mary and Joseph, we may not always understand the journey, but we can be sure that when we trust in Him, He will never lead us astray.

If this book has encouraged or blessed you, I would love to hear your thoughts. Feel free to reach out to me at vespersmakado@gamil.com or visit https://vespersmakado.blogspot.com/ . Your testimonies, reflections, and feedback are always welcome. This book was written in November 2024.

May you continue to walk in faith and thrive in the love of God.

Blessings,

Makado Vespers

THRIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

A LESSON FROM MARY AND JOSEPH

Thriving in Love & Faith: A Lesson from Mary and Joseph offers a powerful reminder that love, faith, and commitment are the true foundations of a lasting marriage—far beyond wealth or financial stability. Drawing inspiration from the humble yet faithful relationship of Mary and Joseph, this book encourages couples and individuals facing financial struggles to trust in God's provision and prioritize their relationship over material circumstances. Through biblical wisdom and practical insights, it shows how to build a marriage rooted in love and faith, even in times of hardship. No matter the financial situation, God’s purpose and provision are greater than any obstacle.

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